

Corporation for National Service

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service oversees three national service initiatives--AmeriCorps which includes AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps and hundreds of local and national nonprofits; Learn and Serve America, which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college; and the National Senior Service Corps, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Service Corps, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

National Service Fellows

The National Service Fellows program, launched by the Corporation for National Service in September 1997, involves a team of individual researchers who develop and promote models of quality service responsive to the needs of communities. The goal of the program is to strengthen national service through continuous learning, new models, strong networks and professional growth.

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About this Guide

Why a guide on inclusion of people with disabilities in national service?

First of all, I worked 2 years on an AmeriCorps demonstration project for the recruitment of people with disabilities. During this time the need was made clear that more guidance was needed among AmeriCorps staff and members in the area of disability. Second, I wanted to see what areas the demonstration projects had most impacted during their two years and look at their best practices and develop training materials. Third, to demonstrate there is a need for understanding accommodations to help incorporate a rich resource of people who have been missing from many AmeriCorps Projects. Fourth, to motivate people with disabilities through action, accessibility and accommodation that they are a rich resource that is greatly needed in national service. Through these actions demonstrate to people with disabilities, the experience of being needed and their ability to meet that need. To increase through the experience of meeting the need, the joy of giving to our community and how important giving is to the experience of being truly alive.

How to use this Guide

This is a guide that will assist project directors in developing and identifying training topics and training needs about disability and disability resources. Directors may use the Guide in its entirety or use one activity at a time to introduce the topic of disability. This is not written to be a panacea of information on disability. There is so much information available on disability there is little reason to restate it here. This guide can serve as a companion piece to the Access AmeriCorps Information sent to every State Commission.

In Section 4 there is background information for the trainer to use for preparation for the activities in Section 5 or to just increase personal knowledge. An activity, objective of activity, process time, suggested materials, and handouts are included in Section 5. References are at the end of the manual to help expand the trainer's knowledge and provide contacts for technical assistance.



Preparation for Training: Due to the sensitivity of the topic, it is recommended that the trainer create a symbolic "parking lot" (e.g. a sheet of newsprint in the corner of the room or an open paper bag somewhere in the room) that allows participants to pose questions that may not have been asked or answered during the session. Set aside a planned time during the day to address these questions.

Fellowship Summary

Motivation for the Fellowship

About seven months into the fellowship on our bi-monthly conference call, one of the fellows asked, "Is what we are doing just smoke and mirrors or light and insight?"(Pickeral, 1999). This simple question is the reason and the motivation behind a project on inclusion of people with disabilities. The National and Community Service Trust Act (1993) and the Corporation for National Service (CNS) Strategic Plan (1998), mandate an increase in individuals with disabilities serving in AmeriCorps and other national service programs. Financial provisions are included in the Trust Act for reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities to ensure equal access. CNS has been consistent in its mandates toward the inclusion of people with disabilities and the distribution of these funds to state commissions. A direct correlation was to be drawn between the inclusion of people with disabilities in AmeriCorps and the use of these funds. In order to know whether the idea of inclusion is light and insight or smoke and mirrors, the following questions must be answered.

- ❑ Have these funds been utilized?
- ❑ Have the funds been used according to the directives of the Corporation?
- ❑ Is there an increase in the number of members with disabilities in AmeriCorps?
- ❑ After looking at the numbers is the increase more of an illusion than a reality?

To know whether inclusion has occurred, the word itself must first be defined. Inclusion means affiliation, involvement, comprehension, embracement, incorporation, embodiment, admission, and reception. Inclusion means inviting those who have been left out in anyway to come in and asking them to help design new systems that encourage every person to participate to the fullness of their ability. Inclusion is how people deal with diversity, with difference, with their own frailty and mortality. Inclusion encourages introspection of individual values. Upon inspection of these values, inclusion requires action. The action of living a life of integrity in concert with ones' values. By acting on these values, inclusion becomes the reality and not the ideal.

To reach true inclusion, many barriers must be removed. The most apparent barriers to people with disabilities deal with architectural designs and communication styles. But, by far the most disruptive barrier appears to be societal attitudes. Attitudes are ruled by perception. "To perceive someone is to behold them with our senses." (Pearce, 1998) This type of perception is innate to human beings. After a person is perceived, they are put in a specifically labeled mental file based merely on external and physical characteristics. People with disabilities fall in the category of different, strange, something to be feared. Human beings have a tendency to fear that which they do not understand Even though there are 54 million people with disabilities in the United States (National Organization on Disabilities 1998), many people still do not know how to interact with people with disabilities. Does legislating inclusion remove barriers and change attitudes?

Project Background

To understand more clearly where CNS is in its efforts toward inclusion, previous CNS efforts to remove barriers must be examined. After the National Community and Service Trust Act and the forming of CNS, disability funds were disseminated to State Commissions. The amount of funds that a state commission received was based on the number of AmeriCorps* State Competitive and National Direct members within the state. AmeriCorps* State formula programs were not to receive accommodation funds due to a glitch in legislation. The disability funds were to be used for outreach and recruitment, training and technical assistance and reasonable accommodation. Each State Commission was given the charge to create their own plan to utilize these funds and then submit that plan to CNS. After receiving the funds, many of the Commissions became more confused and concerned. Some felt incompetent to know enough about people with disabilities and disability services to know how to manage these funds. (Drake Disability Demonstration Compendium 1998)

To help clear up some of the confusion and to further the efforts of inclusion, CNS distributed a National RFP for training and technical support for the Commissions, programs and staff. United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCPA) was awarded this grant which became the Access AmeriCorps Project.

"The Access AmeriCorps project objectives in 1995 were: to provide training at three regional renewal meetings; to develop policy guidelines, to conduct four teleconferences; to develop resource material and organizational lists for each state; and to provide on-going telephone technical assistance over the course of the grant. Training and technical assistance was [sic] specifically limited to the State Commissions. Programs were welcomed to join the training when it was feasible" (Access AmeriCorps 1995).

In 1996, CNS developed another grant competition to have disability demonstration projects. From the 1996 competition, six projects were selected. World Institute on Disability California, Project Maturity North Carolina, Drake University AmeriCorps Disability Demonstration Project Iowa, Austin Resource Center for Independent Living (ARCIL) Texas, and Project Inclusion National Direct and Disability Demonstration Washington State. Each of these programs wrote individual goals and objectives and set about to demonstrate the best strategies for the inclusion of people with disabilities. All but the Washington State Project extended their projects through a second year. Each project developed, wrote and submitted a wide range of materials to CNS for publication.

In 1996, Access AmeriCorps was available nationally for training and technical assistance (T/TA) and the six demonstration projects were available to their State Commission.

- ❑ How effective were these demonstration projects in moving forward the inclusion of people with disabilities?
- ❑ Did the information and the funding "trickle down" through the layers to be impacted? The stream of information moving from the Corporation to Access AmeriCorps and demonstration projects to state commissions to

AmeriCorps Competitive and National Direct programs to the disability community.

Methodology and Results

To measure the effectiveness of the goal of inclusion of people with disabilities in AmeriCorps, a survey was developed to look at compliance. The compliance survey measures a general understanding of the issues surrounding disability. The correlation would be that the more knowledge about disability and the disability funds the more effective the efforts have been. The survey was developed under the topics of outreach and recruitment; attitudinal barriers; retention; physical barriers; accommodations; hiring and selection; training; policies and procedures; service descriptions, member support; materials and communications; life after AmeriCorps and questions on the number of members with disabilities in past service years and the current service year; an inventory of knowledge about community disability; use of accommodation funds over the tenure of the program. (Survey Section 2)

A list of AmeriCorps programs was obtained from the National Service Resource Center/ETR Associates. Surveys were sent out to 399 AmeriCorps programs. Surveys were sent only to AmeriCorps programs because it is these programs which were approved for accommodation funds. Programs that were known to focus on disability services were eliminated from the survey. There were 208 responses to the survey. This is greater than a 50% return therefore the sample is of significance. The survey was set up on a Likert Type Scale. In the multiple choice format; question A represented the least amount of knowledge or activity under that topic and E represented what would be beyond the required knowledge or activity (C being the minimal requirement). For the purpose of brevity, the written results will be kept to the most answered response.

Note: Section 2 has detailed questions and graphs for complete information.

1. Outreach and recruitment - 74 programs answered (B). The range of the questions is from (A) no recruitment to (E) actively recruits.
2. Attitudinal Barriers - 64 programs answered (D). The range is "little awareness of people with disabilities" to using "people first" language.
3. Retention - 51 programs answered B. The range (A) no attempt to examine retention of people with disabilities to (E) Progressions from the community facilitate focus groups on disability issues.
4. Physical Barrier Removal - 72 programs answered (E). The range (A) Program site is not accessible to (E) Building has enhanced ADA compliance.
5. Accommodations - 72 programs answered (B). The range (A) accommodations not provided to (E) Staff goes above and beyond to supply reasonable accommodations.
6. Hiring and Selection - 66 programs answered (B). The range (A) little awareness about the need to supply accommodations for interviews to (E) Experts in disability are involved in providing technical assistance.
7. Training - 73 programs answered (A). The range (A) General members training does not include disability as a training topic to (E) Surveys and discussions with people with disabilities are used to revise or develop other training modules on disability.
8. Policies and Procedures - 67 programs answered (B). The range (A) ADA literature/manuals are not available to (E) Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to enhance service experience of people with disabilities.

9. Service Descriptions - 118 programs answered (C). The range (A) there is not a written service description to (E) Staff receives training in writing and implementing service descriptions. Included in these are examples on how to modify essential functions for people with disabilities.

10. Member Support - 62 programs answered (A). The range (A) Program staff lack training in how to support members with disabilities to (E) A system is in place to support or advocate for members with disabilities.

11. Materials and Communications - 78 programs answered (A). The range (A) Recruitment materials do not reflect inclusion of people with disabilities or state a commitment to place people with disabilities. Materials and communication are not available in accessible formats, or what is available is of poor quality or inappropriate material to (E) Effort is made to review periodically available accessible formats and discuss with members which formats would be most appropriate.

12. Life after AmeriCorps - 122 programs answered (C). The range (A) No information or support is provided for post-service experience to (E) Staff works with people with disabilities to determine what other services would be helpful or could add to the value of post-service support.

(Note: 165 programs answered Questions 13 through 16 because 43 received the survey in field testing before these additional questions were added.)

13. To your knowledge, how many people with disabilities have been members with your program? Of the 95 programs responding yes, there were a total of 873 members with disabilities. There were 70 who responded they have had no members with disabilities.

14. To your knowledge, how many members with disabilities do you currently have? Out of the 73 programs responding yes, there were a current total of 235 members with disabilities.

15. In your opinion, do you have a good knowledge of the disability resources in your community? 82 programs responded "Yes", 23 programs responded "some", 45 responded "No" and 15 did not respond.

16. Have you utilized any accommodation funds from the Commission during your tenure as a Program Director? Out of 165 responses, 129 said "No".

Evaluating the results, there are several pieces of information to be gleaned from the survey. Also considered in the conclusions are a large number of comments that respondents included. Concerning outreach and recruitment it appears that people with disabilities are being considered to be members if they apply. However, among the programs surveyed there are very few (43) who are actively recruiting members with disabilities. According to the question on attitudinal barriers, the program directors are very open and sensitive to having members with disabilities but do have concerns about finances, community resources, and how to make accommodations. On accessibility, more programs are accessible than not and many leave the issue of accommodation to their sponsoring agency. There seems to be a general concern about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and what is required of the individual programs. Several program directors stated a desire to receive training on the hiring and selection of members with disabilities. There is a desire to have more information and training materials developed for the programs and their members specifically on disability. Looking at the individual programs, six or more have large numbers of people with disabilities but most have fewer

than two or none at all. Regarding utilization of funds, more than a 129 out of 165 had not used the funds and many stated that they did not know those funds existed for disability issues.

Recommendations to further increase inclusion of people with disabilities in service:
Corporation

1. All area recruiters should be informed about the Americans with Disability Act and the active recruitment of people with disabilities.
2. All CNS materials should be available in alternate formats and/or a statement on materials saying, "upon request materials will be made available in alternate format."
3. All CNS web pages should be designed in accessible format.
4. A disability inclusion component should be required by CNS as an essential part of the state commissions' and national direct parent organizations' request for proposal process. (Kevin Elliott, Access AmeriCorps 1998).
5. There should be greater "cross streams of service" collaboration allowing Learn and Serve, AmeriCorps VISTA, AmeriCorps NCCC, the Senior Corps, and other AmeriCorps service programs to participate in the training's and access of accommodation funds. (Elliott, 1998)
6. The AmeriCorps Leaders program should offer a strong disability inclusion component in the leader training activities
7. A disability component should be added to the AmeriCorps Members handbook with discussion on CNS policy, accommodation requests and sensitivity and awareness issues. (Elliott, 1998)
8. Include members with disabilities in Public Service Announcements for the Corporation.
9. Have training on how to write a service description with essential functions as a part of the program manager's information.
10. Have regional T/TA available to programs for questions surrounding disability issues.
11. CNS evaluates this survey and sends it out again next year to all of the AmeriCorps programs.

State Commissions

12. All service activity announcements should have an accommodation statement
13. Have Access AmeriCorps Checklist be a part of every program monitoring system.
14. Each State Commission should have an advisory committee for the designation and use of accommodation funds made up of commission, program directors and disability community members.
15. A disability inclusion component should be required by the state commissions and national direct parent organizations from their grantees as part of the request for proposal process. (Elliott, 1998)

Program Directors

16. Each program assign a member with an interest in disability to attend state training on disability issues to take back to program sites.
17. Have disability training materials as a part of orientation for general membership.
18. Develop dialog groups in the AmeriCorps communities and invite people with disabilities and the disability community to participate in a three-week series of dialogs.

Conclusion

Once upon a time in World War II, "the Big War", there were two Air Force pilots flying reconnaissance over islands in the South Pacific. One day, during their regular flight, they noticed several small islands inhabited by hundreds of monkeys. Day after day the pilots noticed that the monkeys were getting thinner and thinner. Watching the monkeys suffer from hunger brought the pilots a great deal of sadness. So the Air Force pilots went back to their base, and finally found some spoiling sweet potatoes. For several days they dropped the sweet potatoes onto the islands, but still the monkeys would not eat them. The pilots surmised that the monkeys must not like eating the dirt, so there was little more that could be done. But, one day they noticed a monkey washing her sweet potato in a waterfall. Very soon all of the monkeys started washing their sweet potatoes. That in and of itself is not phenomenal. However, this is: as a number of the monkeys on one island started washing their sweet potatoes, monkeys on accompanying islands began to wash theirs. There was no way that the monkeys on the other islands could have seen the washing going on nor could they have swum over. So the pilots decided that the monkeys' knowledge of washing the potatoes became so strong at some point that it became an idea in the brains of the monkeys on the other islands. They concluded that if enough monkeys started discovering that they could wash sweet potatoes in the falls, it would soon occur to others that this was possible as well. This phenomenon became the "100th Monkey Effect". (Ken Keyes, 1976)

This story shows that if enough of us think about inclusion and work toward a greater awareness then soon it will become common to include people with disabilities. The mission of inclusion is not to pity people with disabilities or to shame people without disabilities because they have not included people with disabilities. It is about giving all people an equal chance. To stop fearing change and what we don't understand. To start embracing our differences and learning from one another. Take the opportunity to include and to stretch yourself creatively. The ultimate goal of inclusion means the exclusion of barriers to access. Inclusion occurs on an individual level as well as on a program level. It is not enough to mandate inclusion. The mandate motivates those who are open to thinking about how to make change. It is the group who does not have room in its busy mind to accommodate another thought about changing a system. A system, which they believe, is working. This lack of choosing not to notice is the most prominent barrier to inclusion. We must all start thinking about inclusion so that we can prove to ourselves that we are not smoke and mirrors but light and insight.

The mediocre resist change, the successful embrace it.



Erik Olsen.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 recognizes and protects the **civil rights** of people with disabilities and is modeled after earlier landmark laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race and gender. The ADA covers a wide range of disability, from physical conditions affecting mobility, stamina, sight, hearing, and speech to conditions such as emotional illness and learning disorders. The ADA addresses access to the workplace (title I), state and local government services (title II), and places of public accommodation and commercial facilities (title III). It also requires phone companies to provide telecommunications relay services for people who have hearing or speech impairments (title IV) and miscellaneous instructions to Federal agencies that enforce the law (title V). (ADAAG Manual 1998)

National and Community Service Trust Act

An individual with responsibility for the operation of a project that receives assistance shall not discriminate against a participant in or member of the staff of, such project on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or political affiliation of such participant or member, or on the basis of disability, if the participant or member is a qualified individual with a disability. The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, Section 175 (a)

In addition, the National and Community Service Trust Act includes requirements for the provision of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities to ensure that all participants have equal access to and equal opportunity to perform national service.

Corporation for National Service Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan - V. Strategic Objectives and Implementation Steps

Goal Three: The lives of those who serve will be improved through their service experience.

Strategic Objective D. Increase the number of individuals with disabilities serving in the AmeriCorps and other national service programs through full use of the disability funds provided in the National and Community Service Trust Act.

Implementation Steps:

1. Double the number of participants with disabilities serving in AmeriCorps.
2. Greatly increase the percentage of people with disabilities serving through other national service programs.

We cannot legislate against attitudinal barriers; that is the one frontier which each of us must confront. We must all work to remove the negative and stereotypical attitudes from our minds, writings and actions.
President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities 1999.

Access AmeriCorps Boiler Plate Policy on the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations to AmeriCorps Members with Disabilities

Access AmeriCorps has prepared the following boilerplate policy on providing reasonable accommodations to AmeriCorps members with disabilities for AmeriCorps Programs to use in their member participation agreements. This boilerplate statement is a guide for programs: it is neither endorsed nor required by the Corporation for National Service (CNS). However, a statement about reasonable accommodations in the Member Participation Agreement is an effective way to convey the program's commitment to members with disabilities and to demonstrate those members with disabilities will receive equal opportunity, not preferential treatment.

Providing Reasonable Accommodations for Members with Disabilities

(a) The Program expects AmeriCorps members with disabilities to conform to the same standards and expectations of members without disabilities in all aspects of service, including:

- (1) term of service
- (2) rule of conduct
- (3) service tasks, assignments and projects; and
- (4) adherence to program policies and procedures.

(b) Upon a member's self-disclosure of a disability and a request for an accommodation, the Program will engage in the following process:

(1) The Program staff will ask the member to suggest several accommodations and to show how these accommodations allow the individual to complete his or her essential service duties or participate in the Program.

(2) The Program staff will explain possible accommodations the Program could provide to the member. Reasonable accommodations the Program could offer include, but are not limited to: modifying policy and procedures, removing structural barriers, providing assistive devices, restructuring service descriptions, modifying service schedules, and substituting alternative learning experiences in place of educational requirements for qualified members.

(3) The Program staff and the member will jointly determine the costs of each suggested accommodation and assess the impact of the accommodation on the service environment.

(4) The Program staff and the member may invite outside experts to offer ideas and resources on potential accommodations.

(5) The Program will choose an accommodation option (with member input) that allows the member to effectively complete his or her duties and participate in the Program

without causing the Program an undue financial burden or altering the fundamental nature of the service duties or the Program. The Program reserves the right to select an accommodation option that is equally as effective as the Member's recommendation but less costly. The decision on an accommodation should occur within two to three weeks of the Member's original request.

(6) Reasonable accommodation requests may require prior approval from the State Commission on National and Community Service. The State Commission will serve as a source of technical assistance, guidance and possibly funding for reasonable accommodations. The Program will seek approval for reasonable accommodation requests according to State Commission guidelines.

(7) The Program staff and the member will meet at least once after the accommodation is in place to review its effectiveness and make any changes necessary to ensure the member can participate fully in Program activities.

(8) The Program recognizes that the provision of reasonable accommodations is an ongoing process that may require occasional re-evaluations to ensure members with disabilities are fully included in all aspects of service. The Program will engage in periodic re-evaluations of reasonable accommodations on a periodic basis, or when the member requests a re-evaluation.

(9) If the AmeriCorps member is dissatisfied with the decision of the Program the member may file a grievance using the established Grievance Procedure in the Program Policy Manual.

(10) All information about a member's reasonable accommodation is confidential. Documents about reasonable accommodations will be placed in a locked file separate from the member's application and service records. Program staff may not release this information without the member's informed consent.

Reasonable accommodations enhance the opportunity for qualified people with disabilities who may not otherwise be considered for reasons unrelated to actual position requirements to be/remain in their position. The purpose of providing reasonable accommodations is to enable program directors to place or retain qualified candidates regardless of their disability, by eliminating barriers in the work place.

Working Definition:

Reasonable Accommodation is defined as an action an "employer" would be required to make so a person with a disability can do the essential functions of a job

Goals and Objectives for Training

Goals of Training

- To increase participants awareness of disability issues.
- To encourage a basic understanding of the barriers preventing people with disabilities from full participation in society.
- To encourage empathy with people with disabilities.

Objectives:

- 1) Participants will become acquainted with the ADA and National Service Trust Act.
- 2) Participants will discuss their attitudes toward inclusion of people with disabilities.
- 3) Participants will learn to recognize different stereotypes of people with disabilities.
- 4) Participants will have myths about disability dispelled.
- 5) Participants will learn appropriate 'people first' language
- 6) Participants will learn about different types of reasonable accommodations (personal assistance service, the removal of physical and communication barriers, and adaptive equipment.)
- 7) Participants will become familiar with different types of disabilities as defined by the ADA including hidden disabilities.
- 8) Participants will become more aware of their environment in regards to access for people with disabilities.
- 9) Participants will be given resources to contact for further information.

Reasons for Inclusion Training

- ❑ To see how the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) differs from the legal requirements of the ADA.
- ❑ To raise awareness that inclusion is not affirmative action.
- ❑ To increase empathy and knowledge of disability.
- ❑ To unlearn stereotypical thinking towards people with disabilities.
- ❑ To move the understanding of inclusion toward the act of inclusion.



If something dramatic were happening to 15% of our population
don't you think as a people we would feel compelled to do something about it?
Well it is! It is called disability.

An Historical Perspective of People with Disabilities

Courage Center, Golden Valley, MN 1995

Over the ages, people with disabilities have been seen in many different ways. Some of the stereotypes, which have been used to label people with disabilities, persist in the mind of the public even today. Perceiving a person with a disability or a group of people with disabilities according to a stereotype limits expectations and responses. This should become clearer looking at the "historical" stereotypes.

The person with a disability as a "menace"

Between 1870 and 1925, all persons with disabilities were linked with poverty, crime and promiscuity and were seen as contributing to the decline of civilization. Mentally impaired individuals in particular were viewed as threats to society. This view led to the segregation, imprisonment, persecution and even the destruction of thousands of people with disabilities. Placement in large custodial settings or "asylums," as they were called then, was common. Sterilization was widely used to prevent the spread of social problems through heredity.

The person with a disability as an "object of dread"

This view stems from the time when leprosy was a common dreaded disease. The first institutions were built in Europe to house lepers after the Crusades. These prison-like buildings were placed well outside the cities, often on hilltops for the clean air. When leprosy declined, the "leprosariums" were quickly filled with society's misfits, disorderly, and people with disabilities. The image of dread of the lepers was transferred to new tenants.

The person with a disability as "subhuman"

This view is still encountered today, particularly where people with severe disabilities are concerned. Such persons are often compared with "animals" or "vegetables." Simple amenities such as heat and regulation water temperature may be ignored because the person with a disability is thought to be insensitive to heat or cold.

The person with a disability as an "object of ridicule"

Those who remember the movie "Charlie" or the book "Flowers for Algernon" will recall how the mentally impaired main character was the butt of frequent and humiliating jokes from workers. The appearance of people with disabilities in "freak shows" and circuses also illustrates this point. Historical novels show that people with disabilities were used as fools, court jesters or clowns.

The person with a disability as an object of "pity" or "charity"

Until recent years, services (from education to clothing) were given to people with disabilities out of pity or a sense of charity. People with disabilities were even placed in the position of having to beg for survival. The pity and charity approach is still used in public fundraising campaigns.

The person with a disability as a "Holy Innocent"

This view characterizes people with disabilities as "holy innocents," "Children of God," "special messengers," divine reminders to people of their sins, but people who are themselves incapable of sin and therefore not responsible for their own actions.

The person with a disability as an "eternal child"

The most common present misperception of mentally impaired people is that mentally they are children forever. The tendency, then, is to expect them to behave like children. For example, an 18-year-old man may be expected to play with the same toys as a 6 year old, when in fact he could be playing sports and learning vocational skills. Clothes, books, and possessions, which are really more appropriate for children, are often given to adults with disabilities and reinforce the juvenile stereotype.

The enlightened view

Disability has been defined since the 17th century as a physical or mental condition -- usually permanent -- that limits an individual's activities, especially the ability to work (New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1993). Since the 1970s, however, some persons with disabilities have developed a new definition of the word, one that has focused on two issues. The first is a quest for opportunity and inclusion in society -- including opportunities for employment, education, communication, and access to public buildings and transportation. The second is a search for a disability culture, a sense of being different that is positive, proud and powerful (Longmore, 1995). People with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else - the right to fall in love, to marry, to work, to acquire an adequate and appropriate education. Above all, they have a right to self-esteem. Please insure these rights by referring to people with disabilities in terms that acknowledge ability, merit and dignity.

"What befalls the Earth befalls all the sons of the Earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites us all. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself." Chief Seattle

Attitudes and Stereotypes

Taken in part from materials provided by the Courage Center Golden Valley, MN

Most people with disabilities agree that the biggest barriers they face are the attitudes of others. Many people, when meeting someone who appears to be different, feel awkward and react in ways that are not their "normal" reactions. Sometimes people rely on stereotypes or generalizations about people with disabilities that are not based in reality.

Some of these attitudinal barriers are:

Condescension: People sometimes talk down to someone with a disability, as if that person cannot understand normal conversation, or is a child. This is especially true when speaking with a person with a communication disorder, such as speech impairment. A person with a physical disability does not always have a mental disability. Speak to people with disabilities in word and tone that is appropriate to their physical age.

Discrimination: Discrimination appears most often when funds are needed to create architectural access or new programs for persons with disabilities. The argument is "...why should so much be spent for so few?" The fact is that the numbers are not so few. Discrimination also occurs when people don't want to be around other people who look or act different because people do not always know how to behave around those who appear different.

Discomfort: Disabilities are an uncomfortable reminder that all people are vulnerable to accidents, illness and aging. People do not like to think about disabilities, and how having a disability can change lives. Because it is not a part of a person's experience, they can not imagine how they would cope.

Fear: People fear the unknown and are afraid they will say or do the wrong thing. It seems easier to ignore or avoid a person with a disability. Research studies have shown that most people show anxiety symptoms when meeting a person with a disability.

Illness: Generally, a person with a disability is not sick or contagious. A disability may be the result of an illness or an injury.

Invisibility: Sometimes people are more comfortable pretending not to see a person with a disability because then there is no need to interact.

Oversensitivity: When meeting a person with a disability, how often is it that only the disability is seen? People tend to focus on the wheelchair, the scarred face, the missing arm or the seeing-eye dog, not on the person. There is also the inclination to become very aware of the words used such as "Do you see what I mean?" or "Let's walk over there." Generally, people with disabilities use the same terms as other people and there is no need to be concerned.

Nuisance: People see people with disability as a nuisance when the need to make a bit of an effort to accommodate a person is costly in effort, money and time.

Preconceived ideas: Many people may assume a person with a staggering walk or slurred speech is abusing drugs or alcohol. In fact, that person may have had a stroke or a head injury that can cause slurred speech and an uncertain gait. Or, it may be assumed a person with other disabilities may have hearing problems or reduced intellectual ability.

Spread effect: The tendency to assume a person with one disability has more. For example assuming that a person in a wheelchair can not hear.

Special, courageous and inspirational. Another common stereotype about people with disabilities is that they are special, courageous and inspirational. People with disabilities live normal lives and do not want to be regarded as amazing in any way. People with disabilities would like to be seen as people.

Acknowledging difference is merely saying that X is different from Y; assigning value to difference is saying that X is superior or inferior to Y.



Guidelines for Writing Service Position Descriptions

Reference Rice University Human Resources

The primary purpose of a service position description is to identify the essential function of the position. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), essential functions are those tasks or functions of a particular position that are fundamental to the position as opposed to being marginal. Knowing the essential function of the position will aid you in:

- ❑ writing appropriate interview questions; and
- ❑ determining whether a person is qualified to perform the essential functions; and
- ❑ identify reasonable accommodations to enable a person with a disability to perform the essential functions.

What are essential functions?

In identifying essential functions, be sure to consider (1) whether members in the position actually are required to perform the function, and (2) whether removing that function would fundamentally change the job.

The Americans with Disability Act of 1990, from which the issue of essential functions has come into focus, lists several reasons why a function could be considered essential:

- ❑ the position exists to perform the function (e.g. if you hire someone to proofread documents, the ability to proofread accurately is an essential function, since this is the reason that the position exists);
- ❑ there are a limited number of other members available to perform the function, or among whom the function can be distributed (e.g., it may be an essential function for a file clerk to answer the telephone if there are only three employees in a very busy office, and each employee has to perform many different task);
- ❑ A function is highly specialized and the person in the position is placed for special expertise or ability to perform it (e.g. a project has a summer program that includes deaf students and the project needs a member who does sign language.)

To identify the essential functions of the position, first identify the purpose of the position, and the importance of actual position functions in achieving this purpose. In evaluating the "importance" of position functions, consider among other things, the frequency with which a function is performed, and the amount of time spent on the function and the consequences if the function is not performed. The EEOC considers various forms of evidence to determine whether or not a particular function is essential; these include, *but are not limited to*:

- ❑ the program director's judgment;

- ❑ the amount of time spent on the position performing that function; and
- ❑ the availability of others in the department to fill in for the person who performs that function.

In defining the essential functions of a position, it is important to distinguish between methods and results. For example, is the essential function moving a fifty-pound box from one part of the building to another, or is it carrying the box? While essential functions need to be performed, they often do not need to be performed in one particular manner (unless doing otherwise would create an undue hardship).

WRITING THE POSITION DESCRIPTION

So, now it is time to write the position description. Have you carefully thought about what is REALLY needed? Is there tolerance for a new person's learning curve? As you consider your responses to these questions, remember that the staff of local employment offices is available to offer you guidance in writing your position description. There are certain important elements to be included in each position description.

- ❑ list all the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform the position; divide them into requirements and preferences
- ❑ the requirements listed on the position description must support the essential functions, and serve as the primary criteria for selecting/rejecting candidates
- ❑ do not lock yourself into strict requirements that may prevent you from considering qualified applicants. Consider substitutions (ex., 4 years of professional experience or a bachelor's degree)
- ❑ keep in mind that, under the ADA, you cannot refuse to hire a qualified candidate who meets the requirements and whose disability can be reasonably accommodated.

The person with a disability is responsible for determining his own status. He/she must be given the freedom to be, to try, to fail, to grow, to succeed, to learn, to enjoy, to laugh, to cry to even suffer." Leo Busgalia

Position Description Analysis

I. Physical Analysis

Strength/lifting

How much weight is the member required to lift and how often?

_____ less than 5 lbs. _____ less than 40

_____ less than 20 _____ less than 50

Endurance

Work Speed required _____

High

Low

Frequency of breaks _____

High

Low

Stress Level _____

High

Low

Deadlines _____

High

Low

Mobility

Walking required _____ Daily Distance _____

High

Low

Endurance

_____ Push _____ Climb _____ Crouch _____ See _____ Smell

_____ Pull _____ Balance _____ Crawl _____ Color Vision _____ Taste

_____ Reach _____ Stoop _____ Sit _____ Depth Perception _____ Touch

_____ Run _____ Kneel _____ Turn _____ Finger Dexterity _____ Hear

II. Space/Equipment Needs (List)

III. Task/Skill Analysis

A. Problem Solving/Reasoning Tasks

- ☐ Determine own work activities.
- ☐ Devise new ideas, better work
- ☐ Conduct work activities in appropriate sequence
- ☐ Recognize and use appropriate procedures
- ☐ Recognize the effects of changing quantity or quality of materials
- ☐ Obtain resources needed to carry out work
- ☐ Ability to analyze and synthesize information
- ☐ Collect and organize information
- ☐ Correct deficiencies
- ☐ Identify alternative approaches/solutions
- ☐ Evaluate for accuracy and completeness
- ☐ Summarize, draw conclusions
- ☐ Other (as specified)

B. Computer Tasks

- ☐ Enter data into computers
- ☐ Access data from computers
- ☐ Perform word processing
- ☐ Write programs
- ☐ Perform systems analysis
- ☐ Other (as specified)

C. Mathematical Tasks

- ☐ Count

- ___ Understand concepts of greater than and lesser than
- ___ Calculate costs (e.g. interest, discounts, depreciation, prices, and taxes)
- ___ Make and use measurements (standard, metric)
- ___ Prepare budgets
- ___ Understand order (e.g., first, second, last)
- ___ Handle basic calculations (+, -, X, %)
- ___ Estimate quantities needed to do job
- ___ Use numerical values from charts, diagrams, tables
- ___ Construct diagrams, charts, records, using numerical calculations
- ___ Formulas (translating, substituting values)
- ___ Other (specify)

D. Communication Tasks

- ___ Listen ___ Speak Clearly ___ Talk ___ Stay on topic of conversation
- ___ Use appropriate vocabulary, grammar
- ___ Report accurately what others have said
- ___ Present information effectively to group
- ___ Explain activities and ideas clearly
- ___ Follow intent or oral directions
- ___ Other (specify)_____

E. Writing Tasks

- ___ Copy accurately
- ___ Write sentences in Standard English (e.g., spelling, word choice)
- ___ Complete forms accurately (e.g., invoices, sales slips, and requisitions)
- ___ Produce intelligible written documents (e.g., research reports)
- ___ Organize, select and relate ideas in writing (e.g. correspondence)

- ___ Write legibly
- ___ Identify and correct errors in writing
- ___ Other (specify)

F. Reading Tasks

- ___ Identify work-related symbol/sign
- ___ Read simple directions
- ___ Read technical information
- ___ Other (specify)_____

IV. Personal Characteristic/Social Skills (check if important)

- ___ General appearance (hygiene)
- ___ Ability to interact with others
- ___ Appropriateness of behavior
- ___ Flexibility, able to accept change
- ___ Attention span of ___ minutes needed.



Recent Job Accommodation Network (JAN) data show that 20% of accommodations cost nothing and another 60% cost less than \$1000.

Reasonable Accommodation Examples

"Adapt the Job, Not the Person"

Adapted from Access AmeriCorps: State Commission Manual

Mental Retardation:

An AmeriCorps program that addresses local environmental concerns by coordinating park cleanups and urban gardening projects recruits a member with severe mental retardation. Each task that the members are to perform is broken down into several smaller tasks. With the assistance of a job coach from a local agency, the member is provided with one-on-one training on the job. The program director assigns different AmeriCorps members to work "buddy style" with this member on regularly assigned tasks. The job coach also assists the member in developing relationships with other members.

Visual Impairment:

An AmeriCorps program provides a community safety workshops in local schools and community-based programs. A member who is legally blind conducts the workshops. Occasionally, a second member accompanies her to assist her with orientation and direction. All materials for the program are provided on disk.

Diabetes:

The schedule for an AmeriCorps program allows for two 10-minute breaks and one half-hour lunch break. This does not allow sufficient time for a member with diabetes to test her blood sugar and take insulin if necessary. Nor does this schedule allow her to eat several small snacks through the day as required to maintain her blood sugar level. The schedule for the programs can be adjusted so that the member with diabetes is permitted to take five 10-minute breaks at regular intervals throughout the day. This also allowed the member to cover the phone during the "regular" lunch break so that her fellow AmeriCorps members could eat in peace.

Mobility Impairment:

An AmeriCorps program works with children ages three to five in school readiness activities with their parents. Members make home visits and coordinate groups meetings to facilitate interaction and learning between parents and children. A member who uses a wheelchair joins the program. Meetings between the program staff and members are moved to a downstairs room that is accessible because there is no elevator to the upstairs meeting room usually used. When assigning members to families, the Program Director ensures that the member is assigned to families with homes that are moderately accessible (e.g. the member can enter the home without much difficulty by using a portable ramp to wheel up one or two steps at an entrance).

Icebreaker - "The Ungame"

Directions: Sit in a circle and have the first person pick a number from 1 to 29. He/she then answers the question picked or passes it to the next person. The person who passed the question on gets only one more opportunity to choose another number.

Objective: This exercise helps to build intimacy and trust in the group. Continue around the group until everyone has answered at least one question.

Time required: 45 minutes to an hour

1. If you could have been anyone in history, who would you have been?
2. If you received \$5000 as a gift, how would you spend it?
3. What is your favorite sport and what do you like about it?
4. What do you like to do in your spare time?
5. If you were to become President of the United States, what two things would you like to change?
6. What is your favorite room in your house? Why?
7. What kind of animal would you like to be and where would you like to live?
8. What kind of store would you like to own and operate?
9. What is your favorite food?
10. Share three things for which you are thankful.
11. If you could go anywhere in the world on a vacation, where would you go and why?
12. What is one of your hobbies?
13. If you could make a long distance phone call, who would you call and why?
14. If you could become invisible, where would you like to go?
15. What TV or movie star would you like to invite to your birthday party?
16. When you are alone and no one can see you or hear you, what do you like to do?
17. How would you change the world to make it better, if you had enough power?
18. Tell about the best birthday present you ever received.
19. What would you like to do to become famous?

20. What is something you can do well?
21. What really makes you angry?
22. If you had to move and could only take three things with you, what would they be?
23. If you could take only three people with you on a trip around the world, whom would you take?
24. Name two famous people you would like to have as parents.
25. If you could live any place in the world, where would it be?
26. Of all of the material possessions you have, what do you enjoy owning the most?
27. Give three words to describe how you feel right now?
28. What do you think about when you can not fall asleep?
29. What is the worst thing parents can do to their children?

Inclusion does not mean we are all the same. Inclusion does not mean we all agree. Rather inclusion celebrates diversity and differences with respect and gratitude.

(Forest and Pearpoint 1998)

Activity - Need for Inclusion ...Impact of Exclusion

Time required: 45 minutes

Supplies Needed: Self-Adhesive Colored Shapes

Learning Objectives:

1. To heighten participants' awareness of the importance of the basic human need for belonging.
2. To increase participants' understanding of the negative consequences that may result from individuals who feel alienated and minimized.

Activity:

- 1) Facilitator places one self-adhesive colored star (dot or other shape) on each participant's back, making sure it sticks. Facilitator instructs participants not to look at the sticker on their back. Depending on the size of the group, at least two colors should be used. (The more participants the more colors it is helpful to use.) The size of each color group can vary, (i.e. 2 greens, 4 blues, etc.)
- 2) Facilitator selects one to three participants who will get a sticker that is a different shape from anyone else's in the room.
- 3) Facilitator instructs participants to get into groups with people who have the same color star (or other shape) in any way they can, without talking.
- 4) After all the groups have formed, (and the few individuals with the unique stickers have been left out, or been adopted by one of the other groups, or formed their own group or done something else), reconvene the entire group for discussion.
- 5) Facilitator processes the discussion by asking the following questions:
 - a) How did you manage to find your group?
 - b) How did you feel when you found your group?
 - c) How did you feel when you were rejected by a group?
 - d) How did those of you who are wearing the unique shape feel about being excluded?
 - e) Why did you form your own group? (If they didn't, ask why not?)
 - f) Did anyone consider asking one of the individuals with the unique shape to join your group?
 - g) Are there people who group together at your service site?

- h) Are some of the groups at your service site seen as more favorable than others? If so, which groups are seen as more favorable? Less favorable?
- i) How would it feel to be excluded from the favorable groups?
- j) If enough people feel excluded, how might it impact the organization?

Key Points of Activity

- Most people have a need for membership in a group with which they can identify and in which they feel welcomed and proud of their membership.
- When people are excluded from a group, they may feel alienation and experience a lack of self-esteem and self-confidence.
- The feelings of alienation and lowered self-esteem and self-confidence may result in a deeper sense of loss of hope for a successful future with the organization and thus loss of motivation and organizational loyalty.



Activity: Group Brainstorming

Time required: 45 minutes

Supplies Needed: Large Sheets of White Paper, Masking Tape and Markers for each group of 5.

Learning Objective:

1. Participants will discuss their attitudes both negative and positive towards people with disabilities.
2. Participants will learn to recognize different stereotypes of people with disabilities and how we develop stereotypes.
3. Participants will learn appropriate 'people first' language.

Activity: In this brainstorming session, working in teams of 4 or 5 write on post-it notes as many words as you can think of when I say the word disability. Stick all of the post-its on the white paper provided. Allow approximately 5 minutes for answers.

Key to Successful Brainstorming: All answers are allowable. There are no bad answers. There is no judgement of participants or participants answers during the activity.

Without discussion, Turn the paper over and draw a line down the center of your paper and put words into columns of negative and positive.

1. Hang the completed poster paper on the wall.
2. Talk about the positive and negative labels.
3. Where did we learn these labels? Most come from stereotyping.
4. What is stereotyping?
5. Use this to demonstrate person first language.

Key Point: Language is important, because language can be used to define a person. If we take language and thought shortcuts then we can not see fully the depth and breadth of people. How a person is labeled by our society can be either empowering or very disempowering. So when we must use labels, use person first labels. A person with a disability is the most widely accepted language to describe a person with a disability.

Activity: Discussion of Different Disabilities

Time: 1 Hour

Supplies: Markers and White Board or Large White Post-its

1. Have members call out as many disabilities as they can and designate a person to write answers on board or white post-its.
2. Give the legal definition of disability according to the Americans with Disabilities Act

The term disability means, with respect to an individual:

- having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity
- having a record of such an impairment
- being regarded as having such an impairment

3. Which of the disabilities that is written on the board is not legally recognized?
4. Which disabilities are visible?
5. Which are invisible?
6. Looking at this list, how many of you know someone with a disability?
7. What is your earliest memory of a person with a disability?
8. Can you remember your impression?
9. Why do you think it is necessary to have the Americans with Disabilities Act?



Activity: Dispelling common myths about disability

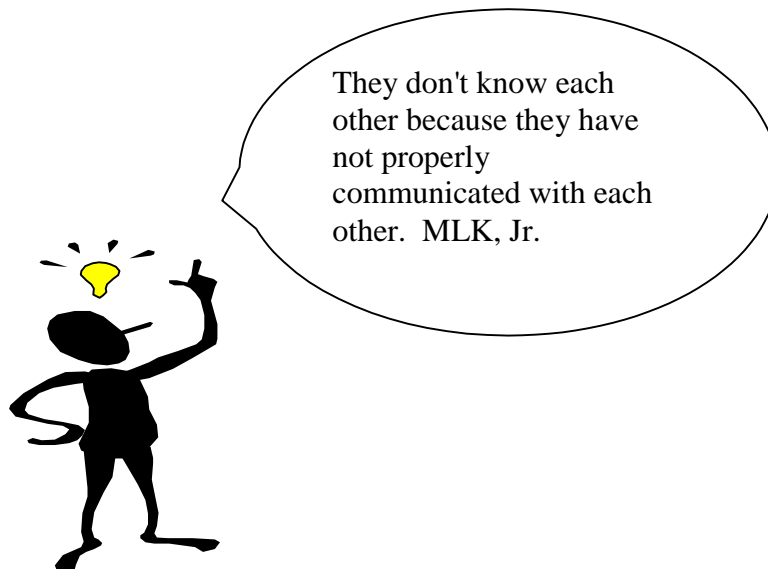
Time Required: 1 Hour

Supplies: Quiz yourself on Disabilities Questionnaire

The ADA is a federal anti-discrimination statute that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. In order to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities, it is necessary to remove barriers that prevent the integration of such individuals into all aspects of life. The ADA covers employment practices, applies to places of public accommodation and most businesses and entities, and provides for equal access to telephone services, as well as closed captioning of public service announcements"

Activity: Draw an imaginary line down the middle of the room. The left side is True the right side is False. Read a combination of myths and truths from the "Quiz yourself on Disabilities" questionnaire and have the members of the group choose true and false by moving their bodies into the correct area. (Mosaica)

If there are people in attendance who have mobility disability use an alternate activity of having the questionnaire on paper have the group members fill out the questionnaire and then go around the room and discuss the answers. It is also recommended to have the questionnaire and any written materials available in 18-point font for people with low vision.



Quiz Yourself on Disabilities

Answer true(T) or false(F) to the following questions

- _____ 1. If a person with a communication disability is difficult for you to understand, act as if you understand.
- _____ 2. The courteous thing to do when walking with a person using a wheelchair is to get behind them and push.
- _____ 3. People with disabilities can have full rewarding lives as married people and as parents.
- _____ 4. If you see a person in a wheelchair stand up, it means they are faking.
- _____ 5. It is o.k. when first meeting a person with a disability to ask them about their disability.
- _____ 6. Working with a person with a disability requires more than the usual amount of patience and understanding.
- _____ 7. When speaking to a person who is deaf and has an interpreter, it is appropriate to speak to the interpreter.
- _____ 8. People who are developmentally disabled are unable to have positions of responsibility.
- _____ 9. The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is an affirmative action law.
- _____ 10. American Sign Language (ASL) is really a representation of English using hand gestures.
- _____ 11. People with disabilities prefer to be referred to as "special" or "differently-abled".
- _____ 12. The correct way to guide a blind person is by offering your arm to them after asking if they would like assistance.
- _____ 13. "Legally blind" means having no vision at all.

____14. All deaf people read lips.

____15. It is not appropriate to ask the name of a guide dog.

____16. People without disabilities should instinctively know how to treat people with disabilities.

Answers to Quiz on Disabilities

1. False. If you do not understand someone with a communication disability, say politely, "Pardon me, I did not understand what you were saying." If after a couple of tries you are still unable to understand, if possible, ask them to write it down. Do this before either of you get frustrated.
2. False. Remember that a person uses their wheelchair just like a person who can walk uses their legs. How would you feel if someone came up behind you and picked you up and started carrying you down the street? If you notice the person struggling in some way, ask if you can be of help? The person will tell you whether they need help or not. Listen to what they say. Your reply will certainly depend on the level of knowing the two of you have with one another. If you are old friends, you may have one reply. If you have just met, there will be another.
3. True. Many people with different types of disabilities have become full participants as spouses and as parents.
4. False. There are different types of disabilities (e.g. multiple sclerosis) where people may have reduced strength and unable to walk any distances at all. There are even some days when they may be better able to walk than others, but they are still able to stand.
5. False. In any relationship, there is a level of intimacy that must be established before you ask personal questions. Use common courtesy. If they bring up their disability and seem to be comfortable talking about it and you would like to inquire, do so, but be sensitive that you are in a very intimate part of their life.
6. False. People with disabilities are just like all people. Some people are smarter than others. Some people catch onto task quicker than others. Each person with a disability is like each person without a disability. We all have different abilities, skills and needs.
7. False. If you are talking to someone who is deaf, stand beside the interpreter so that the person who is deaf can see both of your faces. If the person who is deaf does not have an interpreter and reads lips, do not chew gum, do not put your hands around your mouth, maintain eye contact, speak in a normal tone of voice and speak clearly.
8. False. People with developmental disabilities are able to have positions of responsibility. It is important that they (1) receive clear instructions about what is expected (2) that the supervisor demonstrate to them what tasks they are to do (3) then have them in return demonstrate for you what it is that is expected.
9. False. The ADA is an equality act. It is important to remember that whatever is available to people who do not have disabilities must also be made available to people with disabilities. So when you have a program, it is important to ask if people need accommodations to attend. Is your program accessible by wheelchair? Do you have an interpreter for people who are deaf? Is there enlarged print for people with low vision?

10. False. American Sign Language (ASL) is a combination of signs and fingerspelling. Every word in a sentence is not signed in this type of language.

11. False. People with disabilities do not want to be considered special. It is people without disabilities who have created the labels special and differently-abled. People with disabilities would like to just be people.

12. True. In offering the back of your arm it helps the person who is blind have a better sense of if you are turn

13. False. According to the American Medical Association "a person shall be considered blind who central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with correcting lenses or whose visual acuity, if better than 20/200 has a limit to the central field of vision to such a degree that its widest diameter subtends an angle of no greater than 20 degrees." Legal blindness includes two distinct groups (a) the blind, who have total loss of the sense of vision, and (b) those who are severely visually impaired, but nevertheless do have remaining visual function.

14. False.

15. True. It is important to remember that if a person has a dog assisting them, the dog is working. Dogs assist the people who are blind, deaf, have mobility impairments. If we know the dog's name and call him away, we could be endangering the person with a disability. It would equate to taking away a person's eyes, ears, legs.

16. False. Few people think that they instinctively know how to treat people with disabilities. The key is to be courteous and respectful in equal amounts to people with and without disabilities. To treat every person we meet age appropriate. People with disabilities are just like the rest of us, with our own needs, desires, quirks and habits. It is treat others the way that you would like to be treated. People with disabilities come in both genders, all ages, all colors, all types of socioeconomic backgrounds, all religions, all parts of the world. It is the only minority that any one of us could join in the blink of an eye.

Activity: Breaking down the Barriers

Have participants divide into small groups (3 or 4). Give each group a piece of large white paper and markers. Have the group members answer the following questions.

Time Required: 1 Hour

Supplies Needed: Large white sheets of paper, masking tape and markers.

- 1) What are some physical barriers that people with disabilities might encounter on their way to and from their service site? (Write answers on left side of paper)
- 2) What are some barriers that might be encountered on the way to work and while at work that are not physical? (Write on left side of paper)
- 3) What specifically could be done to remove each of the barriers listed? (write on right side of paper)

Have each group appoint a speaker and tell about their lists.

Conclusions: Point out that the solutions are accessibility or reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable Accommodation means:

- ☐ modifications or adjustments to a job application process that enable a qualified applicant with a disability to be considered for the position such qualified applicant desires, or
- ☐ modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which the position is held or desired is customarily performed, that enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position, or
- ☐ Modifications or adjustments that enable a covered entity's employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment as are enjoyed by its other similarly situated employees without disabilities.

AmeriCorps members with disabilities have the right to draw on funds and resources available for reasonable accommodation. If you or someone you knows has a disability, there is a process in place at the State Commission to review cases and to provide reasonable accommodation for AmeriCorps members. If you need assistance with this procedure or have any questions regarding the type of accommodation that could be available, you can contact your Program Director.

Key Point: Is your program site, team activities and events accessible for peers who have various types of disabilities? If not, trouble shoot what reasonable accommodations could be made to make it accessible.

Activity: Write your position description.

Time: 1 Hour

Supplies: Guidelines for Writing Service Description Positions, poster paper and pens.

Activity: Write the following instructions on the board as well as oral instruction.

- Have group members read the Guidelines provided in Section 4 of this Guide.
- Write down all of the elements of their service position. List 3 physical, 3 mental and 3 emotional requirements that they believe are essential to performing their position.
- After they have written their service position give each group a disability written on a sheet of paper. Ask the group members to decide, if a person with this disability would need an accommodation to serve in this position, and if so what would that accommodation be?
- If they were uncertain would they know where to go to get information about accommodation? Example: Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

There are a couple of things I want to say about what AmeriCorps has done for me. First of all, before AmeriCorps I was not working and wondering if I would ever be able to work again. Working with people in AmeriCorps, and many others that believed in me has given me that confidence that I can work and help my own family with some of the financial expenses. AmeriCorps has given me a sense that possibly at some point, I will be able to be self-supporting rather than dependent on medical assistance. My service experience with AmeriCorps has given me a sense that I may be able to go to college someday. AmeriCorps has been a lift to my self-esteem and confidence and I have a strong desire to see other with a disability benefit from this program as I have.

An AmeriCorps Member with a disability 1999

Samples of Accommodations

People with Mental/Cognitive Disability

1. Encourage use of appointment books and pocket calendars.

Have person refer to calendar daily

Keep old calendars as a record

Provide verbal and written instructions to person

Have person carry a "things to do" list in calendar

Have person prioritize items and number them if helpful

Have person write down tasks or appointments immediately

2. Note Taking

Have person take notes immediately

Have person ask for clarification and repetitions if needed

Have person use a tape recorder if having trouble with directions and needs to review steps

Have person write down questions they have

3. External Aids

Have person use a timer or watch alarm

Have person use a watch with both time and date

Have important numbers posted

Put important items out in the open or by the door

Move to a quiet environment if possible

4. Other Possible Concerns due to Brain Injury

Work simplification principles (break task down into steps)

Give person deadlines for steps

Give person feedback regarding social skills and expectations

People with a physical disability

1. Use of Adaptive Equipment

Use of a reacher to obtain items from high or low surfaces

Use of one-handed letter openers for stabilization

Use of typing splints with computers or typewriters

Use of mouthsticks with computers or typewriters

Use of Dycem to stabilize supplies

Use of keyguards or wrist supports

Use of book holders

2. Possible Modifications

Height of tables shelves and file cabinets

Placement of telephones

Placement of bulletin boards

Key sizes or Key rings

Parking Spaces

Location of office supplies

Use of scatter rugs

Use of rolling stools

Types of chairs

Accessible bathrooms

Additional kinds of accommodations:

- ✓ optional sites
- ✓ flexspace
- ✓ multiple option for service
- ✓ flextime
- ✓ creative supervision to overcome obstacles
- ✓ work site accessibility
- ✓ use of strengths
- ✓ valuing of their perspective
- ✓ visioning and planning
- ✓ strategizing
- ✓ real opportunity for impact
- ✓ Positive assumptions
- ✓ success
- ✓ learning
- ✓ gaining new experience
- ✓ relationship building opportunities
- ✓ meeting new people

AmeriCorps is my testing ground. I have used AmeriCorps to test my strengths and limits. To explore the work experience, in order to determine whether or not I can fit in or if I can work. As the result of the two years of service, I have a sense of direction as to what course I need to do and what type of work lies ahead of me.

An AmeriCorps Member with a disability 1999

Activity: People with disabilities panel

Objective: To break down barriers by exposure to people with disabilities.

Time: 2 to 3 hours depending on the number of panel members.

Activity: Have a panel of people with disabilities come to your project to visit. It is suggested but not always possible to have AmeriCorps members or people who have volunteered to come and share their experiences. If you do not know anyone with a disability who has served as a volunteer, contact local disability agencies and ask if they have a spoke person for their agency that could attend your training.

Before the day of the panel talk with each one of the panel members in person and discuss with them what you would like for the outcome of the panel to be. It would also be good if your panel members were able to meet before they sit on a panel together. Ask your panel members if they would be willing to share about themselves and about their life as a person with a disability. Ask if they would be willing to share about their volunteer activities and how volunteering has made a difference in their personal lives. Also discuss their comfort with answering questions from your members.

Outline for Panel on Inclusion

I. Introduction of panel members by themselves.

II. Each panel member will talk about their individual perspective in relation to inclusion with AmeriCorps.

A. Members will talk about any problems that they have encountered and how they were able to solve these problems.

B. Project directors will talk about the dissolution of real or perceived barriers to inclusion.

C. State Commission representative will talk about his/her experience in the logistics of getting people with disabilities into service.

III. Open discussion moderated by Sponsoring Program Director.

IV. Final Remarks

TAKE HOME ACTIVITY- How do I know if my program site is accessible?

1. Are there designated parking spaces for people with disabilities that are close to the entrance of the program site?
2. Is there a pathway without abrupt level changes or steps that leads from the parking area to the entrance?
3. If ramps are used to provide access are they appropriately graded and are handrails provided?
4. Are the doors wide enough (36 inches) for people using wheelchairs? Are they easy to open (e.g. not excessively heavy, with easily grasped handles, or automatic?)
5. Is the personnel office in an accessible location?
6. Are pathways to the bathroom, water fountain, and public telephone accessible? Can people with disabilities use them?
7. Are elevators accessible to all persons with disabilities (e.g. control panels lower than 54 inches from the floor, raised symbols or numbers on the control panels)?
8. Is all signage appropriate and accessible for persons with visual, learning and cognitive disabilities (including the use of symbols and graphics)?
9. Does the emergency warning system include both audible and visual alarms?

Program Accommodation Sample Statement

AmeriCorps Program seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. Please give 48 hours (Program decides) notice to arrange accommodations. Call (Person's name) and (Phone Number) to make arrangements.

Final Evaluations: Plus/Delta

Time: 30 minutes or more depending on the number of participants. Do not shortchange the final evaluation. Leave enough time at the end to still finish 5 minutes early so that the participants will leave feeling good about the day.

Supplies: Large Flip Chart/White Board and Colored Markers

Activity: Plus/Delta is a useful tool for on-the-spot evaluations; it creates an atmosphere of openness and builds more trust in volunteers. The whole dynamic of training is changed once the members know the staff is willing to listen to their suggestions and act on those suggestions. The key is to continue practicing the pluses, and make the changes suggested in the deltas.

At the end of your training, on a blank flip chart draw a vertical line down the middle of the flip chart and label one side with a Plus sign (+) the other with a Minus sign (-). Either ask in turn or just open up the floor and ask the participants

- ✓ What they liked the best (the least)?
- ✓ What was most useful (least useful) piece of information?
- ✓ What one thing did they learn new during this workshop that they did not know before?
- ✓ What one thing will they commit to do differently after this workshop?
- ✓ Do the participants have any feedback for the facilitator(s)?

Resources

- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Office on the American with Disabilities Act, Washington, D.C. 20035-6118 (202) 514-0301 (voice) (202) 514-0383 (TDD)
- Job Accommodations Network, Washington, D.C. 20004 (800)526-7232 (voice and TDD)
- President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (202)376-6200 (Voice), (202)376-6205 (TTY/TTD), 202 376-6219 (FAX)
- President's Committee's on Employment of People with Disabilities' Job Accommodation Network (JAN) (800)526-7234 (VOICE/TTY/TTD), (304)293-5407 (FAX) jan@jan.icdi.wvu.edu(e-mail)
- Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers (DBTACs) (800)949-4232 (VOICE/TTY/TTD), (703)525-6835 (FAX)
- Access Board (VOICE) (800) 872-2253 (202)272=5449 or (800)993-2822 (TTY/TTD), (202)272-5447 (FAX)

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www.ncddr.org/doorways/emerging

"Work Incentives Improvement Act" Plans are for this legislation to be introduced early in the 106th Congress by Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth and Moynihan. Efforts to pass this during the 105th Congress failed but it is being put on a fast track for the 106th Congress and is a key priority of the Clinton Administration. This proposal, if passed (costing \$1.2 billion over five years) would accomplish the following:

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